

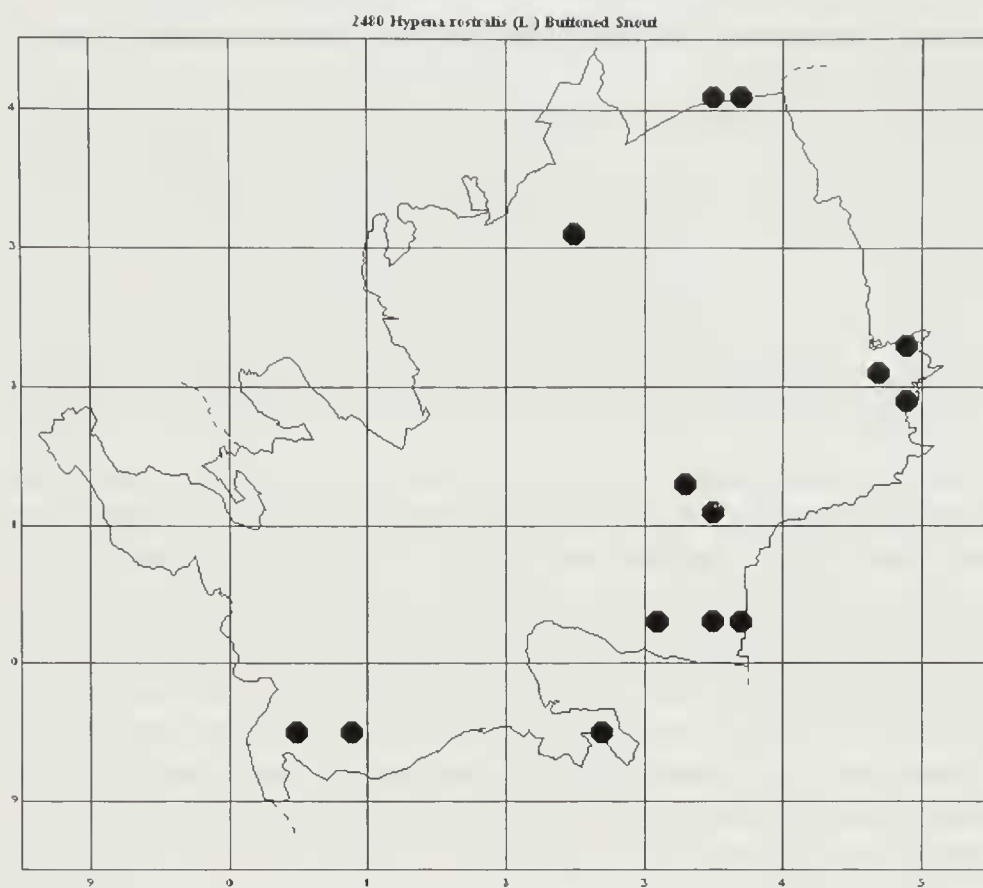
search of this area by bicycle in 2002 resulted in the discovery on 26 August of a stretch of Hop some 100m in extent along a hedgerow by a farm track which runs from Etton east towards Glinton (between O.S. grid refs. TF 141071 and TF 150070, in VC 32 Northamptonshire (now modern Cambridgeshire). This was beaten for larvae on the hot sunny afternoon of 19 July 2003, at which time many of the Hop leaves were full of holes produced by larval feeding which resembled that of the Buttoned Snout. A high density of larvae of the Currant Pug *Eupithecia assimilata* Doubleday was found. At almost every spot one or two larvae of this species fell onto the beating tray. These ranged from first to final instar. A single, half-grown larva of the Comma butterfly *Polygonia c-album* (L.) was found at the Glinton end while simultaneously adults of this butterfly were seen on the wing. A nearly fully-grown larva of the Angle Shades *Phlogophora meticulosa* (L.), some 4 cm in length, was also beaten from the Hop. It subsequently fed on Hop leaves in captivity until pupation, an adult later emerging to confirm the identification. No larvae of the Buttoned Snout were found although they were being seen at other sites on this date.

Plant (1987. *Ent. Rec.* **99**: 276-277) and others have drawn attention to the similarity of feeding damage produced by the Buttoned Snout and Currant Pug and in view of the large number of holes produced when rearing a few of the latter, the numbers seen at the Etton site were easily sufficient to account for all the damage observed. A return visit to the site was made on the evening of 1 August 2003 in the company of Mick Beeson, and larvae of the Currant Pug were still abundant, with a greater proportion in the later instars. A parasitic wasp was reared from one of these and was found dead in the rearing box in September 2003, having been kept in an unheated garage. Dr Mark Shaw at the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, identified it as a member of an unresolved aggregate of species within the genus *Aleiodes*. Adult Currant Pug had also been reared successfully from larvae by this time. Dr Shaw informs me that these wasps have been recorded from the larvae of various geometrid moths but would be most unlikely to attack those of the Buttoned Snout (Noctuidae).

Experience suggests that Buttoned Snout larvae are not difficult to find at occupied sites on appropriate dates, so perhaps the species is absent from the Etton-Glinton farm track. Searches will be made in 2004 to double-check. A much smaller colony of Hop was found growing in a hedge and up a post supporting an overhead cable at the Marholm end of the Werrington-Marholm road (TF 150021). This was also beaten on 1 August 2003, but no larvae of any Lepidoptera were found on it. — PAUL WARING, Reader, Writtle College, Windmill View, 1366 Lincoln Road, Werrington, Peterborough, PE4 6LS (E-mail: paul\_waring@btinternet.com).

### Comments on the Buttoned Snout *Hypena rostralis* (L.) (Lep.: Noctuidae) in Hertfordshire

Paul Waring's failure to find larvae of the Buttoned Snout *Hypena rostralis* at an apparently suitable site in Northamptonshire (*antea*. 77-78) is something of a comfort to me, having failed dismally to find it myself during a Butterfly Conservation funded project search of sites in Hertfordshire. In spite of the apparent abundance of the



species in neighbouring Essex and its prevalence in the suburban zone of north London (Middlesex, VC 21) it does appear absent from much of Hertfordshire, as the map above, compiled from post 1995 records received by me as the county recorder, indicates. The reports are clustered along the Essex and Middlesex borders in the south and east, with just three sightings away from this area, and the moth scarcely ventures into the centre of the county. There are no records at all against the Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire borders in the west. This is of interest, particularly, in view of the results obtained by Martin Townsend (2002. *A survey of the Buttoned Snout Hypena rostralis* (L., 1758) in the Oxford, Reading and Buckinghamshire Chiltern area in 2001. Butterfly Conservation report number SO2 – 12). Although his search was centred away from the Buckinghamshire – Hertfordshire border area, five ten-kilometre squares searched in this region yielded negative results.

The foodplant (*Humulus lupulus*) appears to be absent from much of central and western Hertfordshire and where it does grow it is physically isolated from other areas where it is found; this must surely make it hard for the moth to find it and account for the absence of the latter in some places where hops do grow? As an aside, the three most easterly dots on the map relate to the Bishop's Stortford area and include larval records relating to 'Golden Hop' – a garden variety of the native foodplant.

The sooner a proposed national recording scheme for macro-moths gets off the ground the better – isolated county results such as mine for Hertfordshire will surely take on new meaning if they can be easily set in a regional or national context.—  
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